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Kamid el-Loz: from village to city and back to village

3000 years of settlement history in the Beqa'a plain

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c o n t e n t s



1 Clay tablets, photo archives Roger Saidah, courtesy Estelle Saidah.

KAMID EL-LOZ

Kamid el-Loz





2 **Bronze figurines. Photo archives Roger Saidah, courtesy Estelle Saidah. Comparable figurines have been found in Byblos, in the so-called Obelisk-Temple (2nd millennium BC), where they are considered to be male gods.**

Kamid el-Loz: From Village to City and Back to Village. 3000 Years of Settlement History in the Beqa'a Plain

Kamid el-Loz is one of the largest and highest Tells of the Beqa'a valley. It is situated in the plains, about 950 meters above sea level.

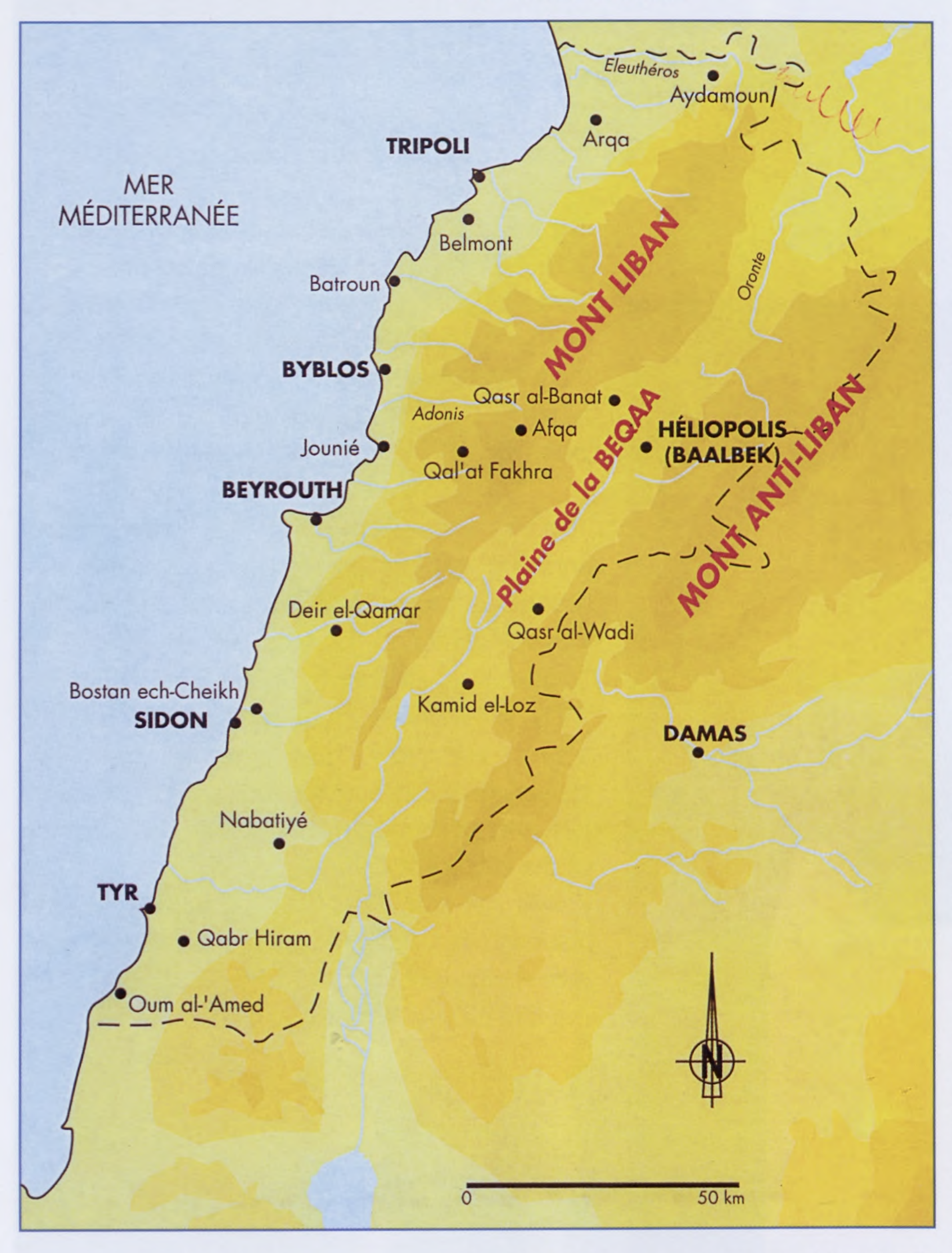
The hill encompasses an area of 300 by 240 m. Today it rises about 26 meters over the Beqa'a Plain. The Tell could easily have been higher in its original form. In the course of time, sediments in the alluvial plains have obviously leveled out the difference in altitude between the Tell and the plains.



The first excavation of the Tell Kamid el-Loz and the exploration of the immediate surroundings began in the year 1963 under the general direction of Prof. Dr Hachmann of Saarbrücken and Prof. Dr Kuschke of Mainz. After a two-year period, the University of Mainz withdrew from the project. The University of Saarbrücken took over the excavation and continued the work until the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1981.
It was not until 1997 that the work could be resumed, but this time by archaeologists from the Albert-Ludwigs University-Freiburg under the direction of Prof. Dr Marlies Heinz.

THE BEQA'A PLAIN

Geography, the system of supply routes and the position of Kamid el-Loz in this context



3 Map of Lebanon.

The Beqa'a Plain is encircled by two mountain chains from the Anti-Lebanon and Hermon in the East and from the Lebanon Mountains in the West. Small valleys and clefts provide access through these barriers and at the same time supply route connections to the Syrian steppe on the one side and to the coastal area on the other. In the North, the Beqa'a Plain borders the Syrian flat lands, and in the South it joins the Palestinian Plain.

The Beqa'a Plain was strongly walled off from its neighbours on the one hand, but simultaneously served as a central transit crossroad due to the east-west routes and the north-south axis. To be geographically confined and at the same time integrated in the network of connecting routes also characterizes the location of Kamid el-Loz at the foot of the Hermon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains. The location provides the settlement with protection as well as a commanding view of the plain. In the immediate vicinity of the settlement, crevasses and breakthroughs in the mountains allow accessibility for connections to the East which were integrated by Kamid el-Loz into its system of overland routes.

The Beqa'a Plain was part of a network of routes that connected Egypt to the Middle East and North Mesopotamia during the period of ancient oriental cultures. The course direction of the routes being used at that time branched off from the Palestinian coastal route south of the Karmel Mountains, then continued towards Megiddo, crossed the Jezreel Plain, passed by Beth Shean, and north of Hazor it veered northbound where it continued until Marga'yun in South Lebanon. From there, the route changed and ran up over a mountain ridge in the upper Hasbani River Valley. In the Beqa'a Plain, the route ran on to Maghdal-Anjar. South of this station, near Kamid el-Loz and Sultan Ya'qub, a gateway to the East in the direction of Damascus was

provided by a deep opening in the mountains. This opening undoubtedly furnished a vital prerequisite to the development of the settlement at that location one of the most significant villages of the Beqa'a Plain. Only somewhere near Kamid could there have been another route, branching off to the West from the one running South to North. And from this point the important west-east route that linked the Beqa'a Plain with the coast took its course. Leading from the coastal city of Sidon, the route ascended towards the East and passed by Jezzin. From there it ran to Mashgara, where the descent in the direction of the Beqa'a Plain began. Crossing the plain, the route ran in the direction of Khirbet Kanafar.

At this point, near Tell Jisr a route branched off during the Ancient Oriental period from the north-south direction towards the East which ran into the Kamid el-Loz/Damascus connection. Another west-east connection existed between Damascus and Beirut whose course corresponds still to the present-day roads.

4 Map of Lebanon, K.-H. Bernhard, 1976, *Der Alte Libanon*, Leipzig.

ENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIALS
and their possible influences on the development of Kamid el-Loz

As a rule, it is seldom the case that suitable conditions for founding a settlement like those in Kamid el-Loz do not have an effect on the political, economic, and cultural development of a region. The potential of the immediate natural environment offered a sound basis for securing subsistence. Cultivation of wheat, farming, animal breeding, hunting, gathering, and fishing supplied a solid economic foundation for the settlement. People in Kamid el-Loz bred cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and dogs. They hunted gazelle, elk, deer, bear, and rabbits. Freshwater fish were readily available and they ate seafood that was brought from the Mediterranean. Sufficient rainfall during the right season allowed farming without artificial irrigation. Additional measures for watering could be applied in relation to the increase in production. A nearby well ensured a supply of fresh water. The Beqa'a Plain provided access to a rich variety of plant and animal resources. However, this area lacked mineral resources and raw materials such as ores, precious stones, bitumen, and building timber.

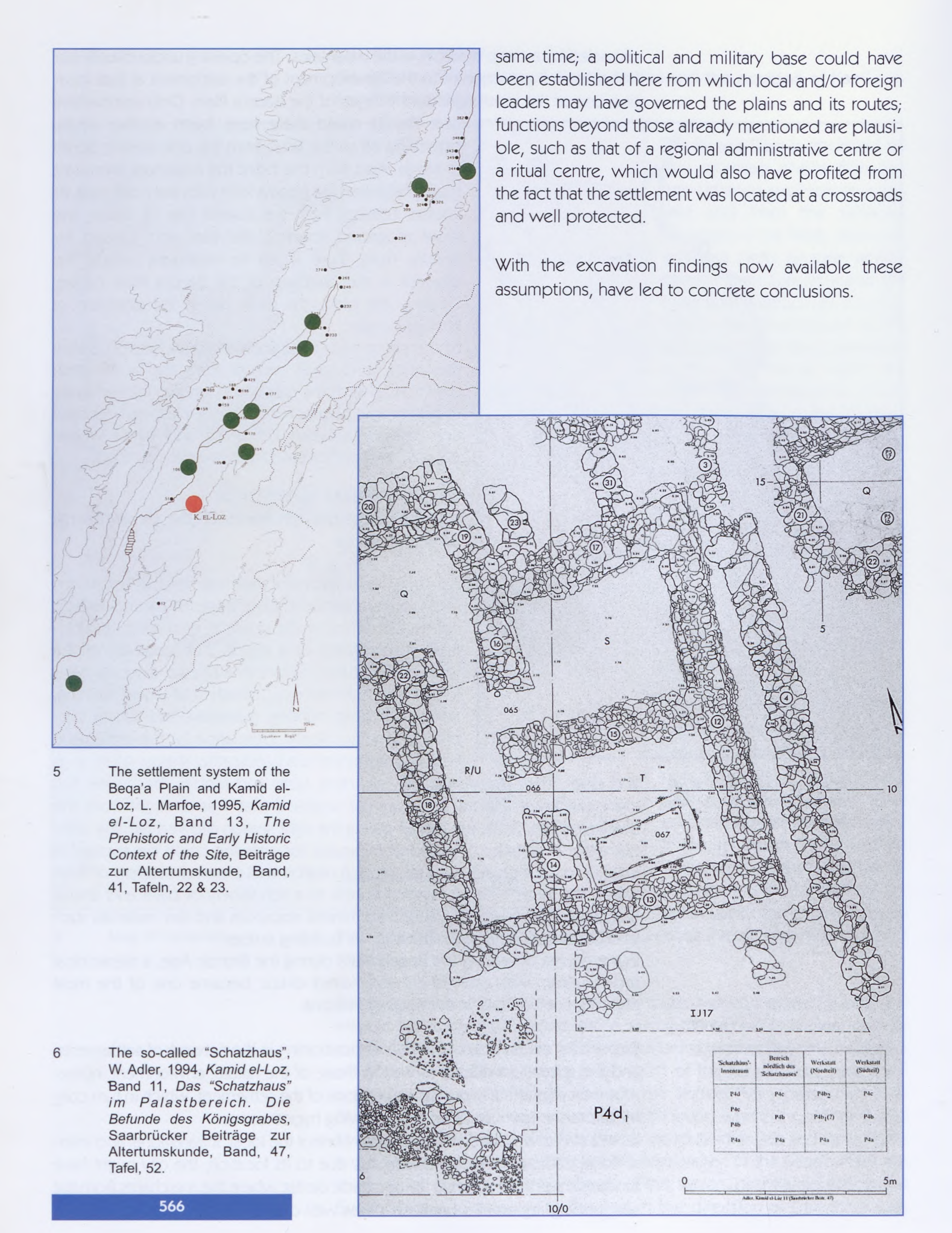
In the course of settling the Beqa'a Plain during the Bronze Age, a hierarchical urban system was established and Kamid el-Loz became one of the most important settled hills in the southern Beqa'a.

Depending on the size of the Tell, its positioning in the network of settlements, and the spatial conditions as well as those of the natural environment, numerous indications imply probable functions of the settlement, which in turn contribute to the formulation of the following hypothesises:

Kamid el-Loz was theoretically able to control the local, intraregional and interregional traffic on the overland routes due to its location; the city might have functioned as the trade hub, or as a trade centre where the merchants from the surrounding region met because it was well-connected and protected at the

same time; a political and military base could have been established here from which local and/or foreign leaders may have governed the plains and its routes; functions beyond those already mentioned are plausible, such as that of a regional administrative centre or a ritual centre, which would also have profited from the fact that the settlement was located at a crossroads and well protected.

With the excavation findings now available these assumptions, have led to concrete conclusions.



5 The settlement system of the Beqa'a Plain and Kamid el-Loz, L. Marfoe, 1995, *Kamid el-Loz,* Band 13, *The Prehistoric and Early Historic Context of the Site*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band, 41, Tafeln, 22 & 23.

6 The so-called "Schatzhaus", W. Adler, 1994, *Kamid el-Loz,* Band 11, *Das "Schatzhaus" im Palastbereich. Die Befunde des Königsgrabes*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band, 47, Tafel, 52.

KAMID EL-LOZ, A LATE BRONZE AGE CITY IN THE BEQA'A PLAIN
First excavation results

During the Late Bronze Age (*ca.* 1600-1200 BC), the period so far best known for Kamid el-Loz, the palace, the so-called treasure house, and a workshop area were placed at the highest point in the settlement. Adjoining this zone to the north was an area for official functions - a temple and a residential section. The settlement was fortressed.

A comprehensive publication on the palace has not been produced to date but in the area of the treasure house and the temple, there is adequate information to answer questions pertaining to the functions of the Late Bronze Age settlement.



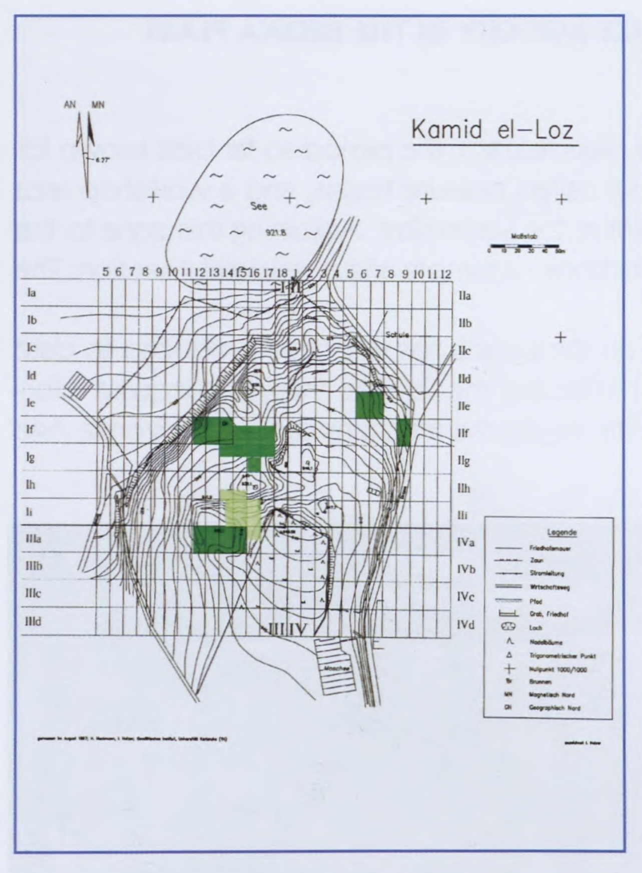
7 A goddess; silver sheet, covered with gold, R. Hachman, 1983, *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon*, Mainz, p. 41.

8 Stone vessel, R. Hachman, 1983, *Frühe Phöniker im Libanon*, Mainz, p. 49.

The so-called treasure house or "Schatzhaus" originally received its name because of the numerous objects that were found there. But this is not an accurate label according to its function. Evaluation of the building's history and its use has produced a list of various types of functions, but it was never a treasure house.

Built of stone, it was located very close to the palace. The fundamental construction consisted of three rooms, a hallway, and beneath that a cellar. The rooms S and T in the cellar served as burial chambers and R/U as anterooms. Two children and one adult were buried here. Ceramics, pitchers and lamps were stored in the anterooms to ensure provisions for the dead in the hereafter. Placed in a row in room T, first a seven-year old child was buried and then later an adult man. The use of the stone-tub found in the same room is still unclear; it wasn't used to bury the dead because they had been placed along the east wall. The graves were destroyed during that same period. Despite this fact, a large number of objects, including ceramics, stone containers, glass, fayence, metal, ivory objects, and gold jewelry remained intact.

Room S also served as a burial chamber for a female child about eight years of age. Although this grave had also been destroyed, there were still numerous objects found associated with it. The inventory consists of gold jewelry, containers made of different kinds of materials, and a small ivory box.



9 The site map of Tell Kamid el-Loz.

2002: areas If 12 – 14. Dark green – the new excavations in bright-green – the temple-area of Kamid el-Loz.

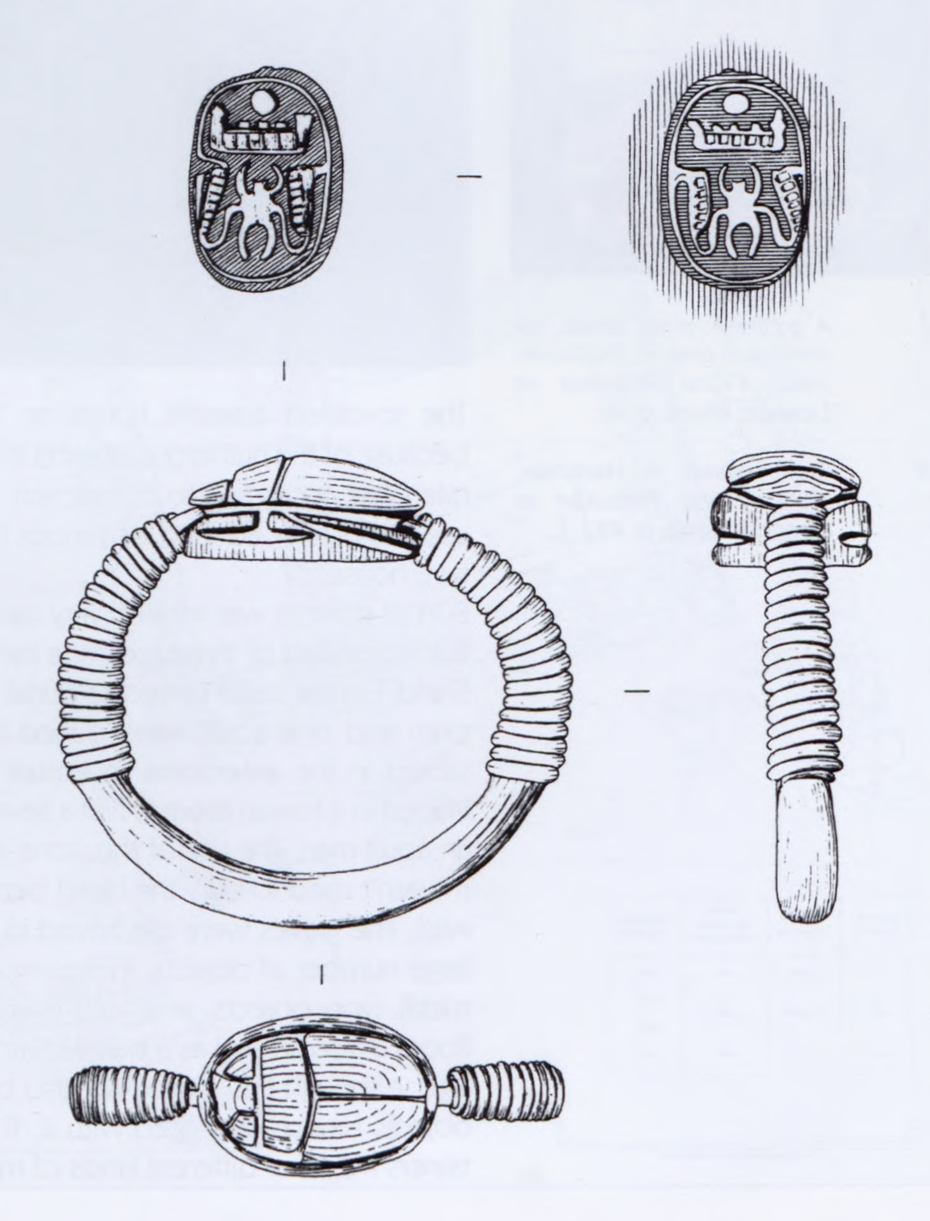
2002: areas IIIa 12 – 15 dark-green – the new excavations bright-green – the palace-area of Kamid el-Loz, including the area of the so-called "Schatzhaus".

2002: areas IIe 6 – 7, II f 9 the new areas.

Another burial object of the treasure house, a finger ring was found in Room T, on which a scarab of Thutmosis III was presented. Thutmosis ruled from 1479 to 1426 BC. During that period, or perhaps later, the treasure house must have been used as the burial site. The close proximity of the house to the palace, as well as the type of wealth indicated by the objects placed in the burial chambers leads us to believe that those buried there belong to the circle of elite in that community, which explains the wealth indicated in the graves of the children, who would not yet have been able to acquire that kind of wealth through their own efforts.

After the use of that house as a gravesite, the building was temporarily abandoned and it thus deteriorated. Neglecting such an important burial place in such a way is puzzling and raises the question of political developments at that time in Kamid el-Loz.

A later renovation of the house resulted in the cellar being filled in, thereby making the graves inaccessible. The house then served as a warehouse for handmade products and raw materials. In all probability, it was used by the neighbouring



10 Thutmosis III finger-ring with scarab. R. Miron, 1990, *Kamid el-Loz, Band 10. Das "Schatzhaus" im Palast bereich. Die Funde*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 46, Tafel, 30.

workshop owners. These workshops may have belonged to and worked for the palace. There was a third renovation after which the building probably served as living, representative and administrative quarters for people from the palace.

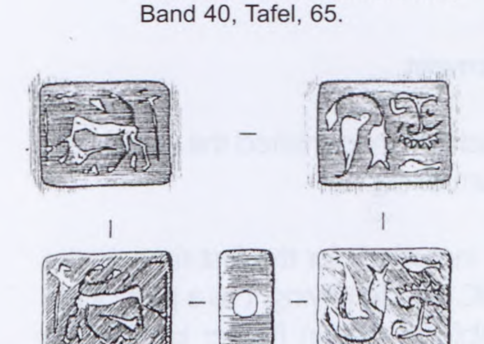
11 Temple 3 a-b of Kamid el-Loz, M. Metzger, 1991, *Kamid el-Loz*, Band 7, *Die Spätbronzezeitlichen Tempelanlagen, Stratigraphie, Architektur und Installationen*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 35, Tafel 41.

The objects found in the burial chambers of the so-called treasure house, as well as the burial rituals themselves, confirm the supposition that Kamid el-Loz's proximity to the overland routes was used to create contacts on both a regional and interregional level. The stone containers, the jewelry and the ivory work document these connections, illustrating here the relationship between Kamid el-Loz and Egypt. The burial rituals – namely the placement of the dead within the community borders, and in this case under the houses - corresponds to those of contemporary Syria where the residents eg. of the city of Ugarit were also buried underneath their houses. Other burial practices regarding community residents took place in the surrounding mountains near Kamid el-Loz. One such practice involved placing the dead in caves - a ritual that corresponds to the Palestine tradition at that time.

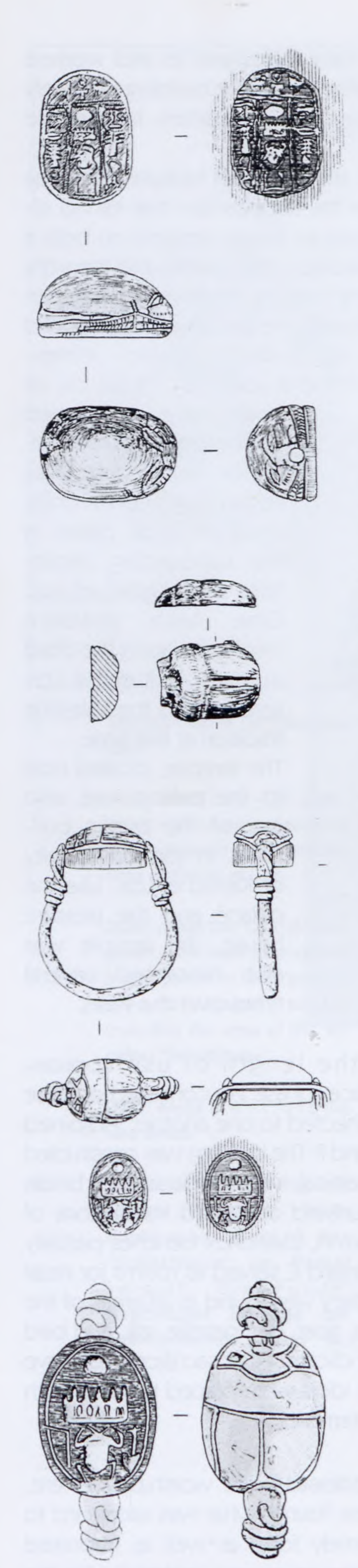
The temple, located next to the palace, was also one of the public buildings in the community of Kamid el-Loz. Like the palace and the treasure house, the temple was also renovated several times over the years.

The T3 construction phase temple, of which the length of use approximates that of the treasure house and the palace, phase P4, consisted of three complexes. Room B and courtyard C are connected to one another. Adjoined to that are the specially closed-off rooms A, O and P. The building was constructed on a stone-wall foundation, on which the vertical walls made of clay bricks were erected. All of the rooms and the courtyard contained installations of stone and/or clay bricks. Additionally, in room A, clay/brick benches partially lined the walls. The rooms A and B and courtyard C served as rooms for ritual practices, rooms O and P as workrooms. Pottery was found in all areas of the temple. Animal bones, including cow, sheep, goat, pig, gazelle, elk, and bird bones, were integrated with all installations indicating that sacrifices may have been made. Jewelry and weapons as well as idols were placed together with natural produce and animal sacrifices, in the temple.

12 Small finds from the Temple, M. Metzger, 1993, *Kamid el-Loz*, Band 8, *Die Spätbronzezeitlichen Tempelanlagen, Die Kleinfunde*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 40, Tafel, 65.



It is not known what kind of gods or goddesses were worshipped here. However, with regard to the objects that were found, what was sacrificed to the gods can be determined. This was namely food as well as imported objects, imported either in their original form or as raw material. Like the objects buried with the dead, those uncovered in the temple document the



fact that the settlement's residents maintained contacts with other regions that extended beyond their immediate vicinity where metals and precious stones could be acquired. Whether these contacts reached as far as the actual area in which these raw materials originated, or whether the raw materials and goods were acquired through middlemen cannot be ascertained from the goods themselves.

A PALACE, A TEMPLE, IMPORTED GOODS
The functions of Kamid el-Loz during the Late Bronze Age: Further considerations

The objects found in the temple and the construction of the temple itself, extended the range of relevant information regarding the functions of the settlement.

Kamid el-Loz was furnished with buildings in which the so-called elite resided and conducted their administrative duties. In this case, that means the so-called palace and the treasure house. The temple also belongs to the list of buildings used for public functions.

Finds from the graves and the temple prove that Kamid el-Loz was connected to local and far distant trade. The import of raw materials and objects shows that the elite of Kamid el-Loz possessed the means for getting these imports.

Up to now, we only have knowledge of the imports retrieved from the burial places and the temple, but not from the residential housing. Stemming from these findings, the question arises as to whether or not the imports were only meant for a certain circle of residents in the settlement. Were these considered luxury items that were not a part of daily economic trade, but possessions belonging only to a circle of so-called elite in Kamid el-Loz?

Based on this assumption, other questions follow concerning the social order in Kamid el-Loz. The current, and still very preliminary picture, gives the impression that at the top of a hierarchically-constructed society was a socially-privileged elite group.

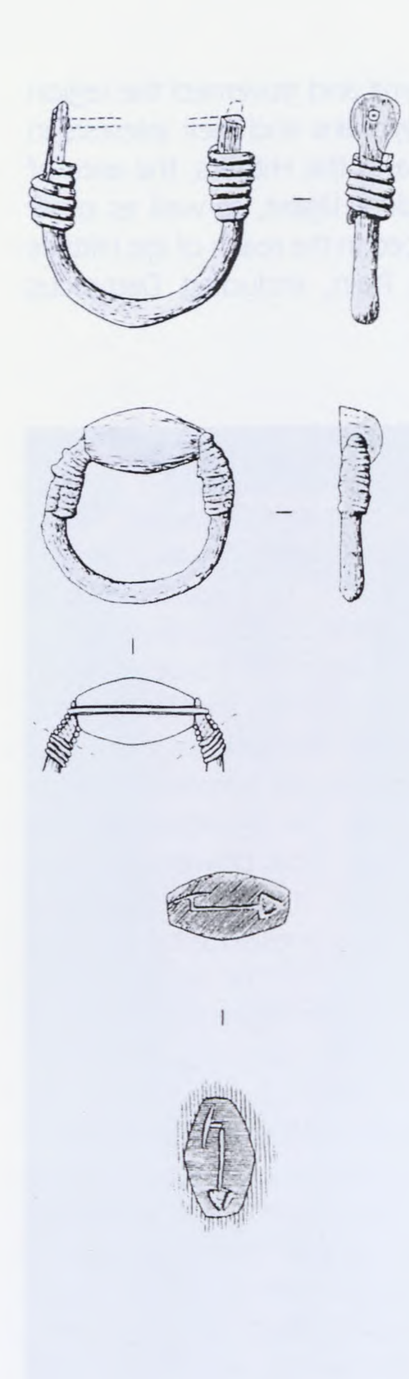
At this point, the first conclusion can be drawn as to the possible functions of Kamid el-Loz in the late Bronze Age. As the largest settlement in the direct vicinity, Kamid el-Loz served presumably as the administrative and ritual centre in the region. Provisions for the centre were supplied by the villages nearby. It is plausible that a functioning economic administration existed and was responsible for redistribution and also for securing the import of valuable goods. This settlement had direct connections to both immediate neighbours as well as to regions further away, which can be seen, above all, through the imports.

This interpretation is primarily based on the data associated with the settlement and secondly from the objects that were found in the excavation itself.

TEXTS FROM KAMID EL-LOZ
and the historical placement of the settlement

In the palace (P 4), cuneiform texts were found which identified the settlement of Kamid el-Loz as the Bronze Age city of Kumidi (fig. 1).

This discovery allowed the settlement to be included, for the first time, in the chain of events that defined the 2nd century BC. By identifying it as a part of the 2nd century chain of events, it is now possible to obtain further knowledge



concerning the function of Kamid el-Loz. The contents of the clay tablets places the settlement in the period during the reign of the Egyptian ruler Amenophis III (1390-1352 BC). The city of Kumidi is mentioned in letters found in the archives of Amarna, the Egyptian residence of the ruler Amenophis IV = Echnaton (1352-1336 BC). Together with the ring found in the so-called treasure house, which is dated to the time of Thutmosis III (1479-1426 BC), the reigning periods of three Egyptian rulers provide the most accurate information for dating a phase of the late Bronze-Age Kumidi settlement.

Aspects of Egyptian Dominance in the Levant

All three rulers belong to the 18th Dynasty of the new Egyptian empire. The political activities of the rulers of the 18th Dynasty resulted in a major transition in the relations between Egypt and its neighbours, as well as in the Beqa'a Plain. Instead of encouraging the forming of reciprocal trade relations, the Egyptian policies were aimed at an interregional control of the trade routes through Palestine, the Beqa'a Plain, and Syria. Thutmosis II (1490 -1437 BC), in his 22nd year of rule, saw himself confronted by a coalition of rulers from Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria that questioned the claims of Egyptian's supremacy. In a battle near Megiddo, Thutmosis conquered the opposing coalition, thus taking control of Megiddo, a city that played a vital role in interregional trade. He thereby anchored his foreign policy and set the stage for Egypt to become the governing power of the Near East. After 16 further conquests, the area under Egyptian rule encompassed South Lebanon, the Lebanese Coast, and South Syria up to the line running between Byblos and Damascus including the Beqa'a Plain. Thutmosis' strategy ensured that the most significant trade routes through the Beqa'a and the most important connections to the East via Damascus to the Euphrates and on to Mesopotamia fell under Egyptian rule. Byblos, the most prominent harbour of the Mediterranean, remained under Egyptian influence. In the beginning of the succeeding period, the political circumstances for Egyptian rule in Syria were not particularly favourable. Local rulers again formed an alliance only this time against Thutmosis III. In the 2nd half of the 15th century BC, the state of Hurri-Mitanni in North Syria came into existence with a political power that extended into South Syria. This gave rise, on Syrian territory, to a conflict of interests between two powers. The city of Qatna exemplifies how the goal of Egyptian foreign policy to control the internationally used trade routes was endangered. Alongside Damascus, Qatna was one of the most important villages that served as a stopover for caravans out of Palmyra (Tadmor), and was therefore of enormous interest to the Egyptians. During the reign of Amenophis II (1450-1425 BC), this city fell under the control of Mitanni, which lead to a conflict between Mitanni and the Egyptians. The two parties resolved their differences by contractually regulating the extent of their spheres of interest.

Afterwards, the newly-determined Egyptian sphere of influence ran along the Lebanese-Syrian coast to Ugarit, and inland northwards to Qadesh, including the trade of Qatna. This entire territory was again under Egyptian rule. The two most important trade hubs of Southern Syria, Qatna and Damascus, remained, for a certain time, under Egyptian rule. The succeeding rulers of the 18th Dynasty, Amenophis III (1390-1352 BC) and Amenophis IV (= Echnaton) (1352-1336 BC), like their predecessors, had to cope with revolt and rebellions from the local rulers. At the same time, a renewed threat to Egyptian foreign policy were claims of power that developed with the strengthening of the Hittite Empire. The Hittite King Suppiluliuma I (1380-1346 BC), a contemporary of

Echnaton, suppressed the Mitanni of Northern Syria and governed the region subsequently questioning the authority of the Egyptians and their interests in Syria. Following a war between the Egyptians and the Hittites, the area of influence in Syria and Lebanon was newly divided. Ugarit, as well as other small towns along the coast, and Qatna were placed in the realm of the Hittites sphere of influence. Byblos and the Beqa'a Plain, including Damascus remained under Egyptian rule.

EGYPTIAN DOMINANCE OVER LEBANON and the function of Kamid el-Loz

How was Kumidi involved in the political events of the times? I would like to elucidate, in the form of a hypothesis, the significance and function of Kamid el-Loz pertaining to the Egyptian foreign and economic policies. Situated at the crossroads of the most important East-West, North-South connections, a village like Kamid el-Loz (Kumidi) maintained a key function at a time in which interregional trade constituted an essential part of economic and foreign policy. In order to guarantee successful control of both international trade and political dominance of the region, it was imperative for the Egyptians to keep villages like Kamid el-Loz under constant supervision. The Egyptians had various options to practice this type of control. Where local power structures were already developed and a political elite existed, it was convenient to leave the old governing elite in office and to maintain surveillance by also placing some of their own military personnel in office as well. The advantages of this policy were obvious. The existing infrastructure, the know-how, and the alliances among the governing elite could continue to be used. However, controlling those already in power, with only a military presence, was not enough to guarantee their loyalty to the Egyptians. It was far more important that the foreign rulers ensured that the local elite did not suffer a loss of prestige by cooperating with the Egyptians. As a rule, in the appropriate power constellations, the distant ruler prevented a loss of prestige and strengthened loyalty by supplying the local elite extensively with prestigious goods.

Another alternative to ensure control in the peripheral villages was to replace the old elite with Egyptian administrators. In Kamid el-Loz, apparently both strategies were carried out. During the late 15th century BC, the local administrator Arahattu ruled. Arahattu was a contemporary of the Egyptian ruler Amenophis III (1390-1352 BC), the successor of Thutmosis III. During this period, the Beqa'a Plain was already under Egyptian control. Arahattu governed, in all probability, under the supervision of the Egyptians, who allowed the local governing elite to remain in office. However, he obviously behaved disloyally to the Egyptians. There are no existing records of the consequences of this behavior but we hear, that a local administrator, in the following period, did however "correct" the political organization of Kumidi.

During the governing period of Echnaton (1352-1336 BC), Kumidi rose to the status of regional capital under the direction of an Egyptian administrator by the name of Puhuru: four such regional capitals were apparently set up by the Egyptians in the Near East. Two in Palestine and two in Syria and Lebanon. This is how Kumidi rose to such significance for the Egyptians during that time. The functions and duties of regional capitals is known rather extensively through the letters of Amarna. The administrator of Kumidi, Puhuru, had troops at his disposal which he could dispense against enemies of the capital and Egypt in the case of an emergency. He had the responsibility, above all, to ensure the safety of the caravans, as well as the maintenance of law and order. This responsi-

bility extended far beyond Kumidi on to Byblos, where the local Egyptian administrator lost his powers.
At the time of the Egyptian supremacy in the Near East, the Egyptians obviously required an infrastructure to achieve their political and economic goals. Although further excavations of the Tells in the Beqa'a Plain have yet to be carried out, based on the survey results of the Beqa'a Plain and the knowledge from Kamid el-Loz/Kumidi there is sufficient information to outline the layout of the infrastructure.



13 Mycenaean rhyton, photo archives Roger Saidah, courtesy Estelle Saidah.

Apparently, a settlement system with a polycentric structure developed in the Beqa'a Plain. The settlement system was hierarchically organized, but at the same time there were centres of equal rank which were assigned specific tasks to carry out. An enormous competitive pressure could surface between the various centres, but they probably shared similar structures and certainly similar cultural backgrounds. It can be assumed that other city centres of the Beqa'a plain also accommodated political and ritual sites, residential zones, and areas for handicrafts and trade. City maps and settlement structures of other cities of the late Bronze Age are, however, relatively unknown.

With Kamid el-Loz/Kumidi, the Egyptians used a city that was already set up with all the appropriate structures to function as a regional capital, namely the optimal location, as well as the necessary structural components such as representative buildings, a residential area, ritual buildings, workshops, and a fortification. A local political elite and a functioning administration also existed. The most significant factor of Kumidi's development as the focal point of the regional and interregional traffic routes, and later to the administrative centre of control, was definitely the geographic location. This could, however, only be true in as far as a regional and interregional demand for traffic connections was at hand. Such a function requires that an equal demand for trade exists in the neighbouring regions and that the Beqa'a itself was adequately developed and settled along the trade routes. The development and the settling of the Beqa'a Plain was certain. The chain of events shows the central role that the control of traffic routes in this region had in the policies of the great powers.

The excavations of the 1960's to the 1980's, mainly focused on the pre-Roman settlement periods, providing information for a glimpse into life as it might have been in the late Bronze Age city of Kumidi.

For details concerning the excavations in Kamid el-Loz between 1963 and 1981 see the excavations reports, published in the *Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde*. For the historical events see the very detailed analysis of W. Adler, 1994, which was also the basis for the above given considerations. For the reconstruction of the settlement patterns in the Beqa'a plain during that time, see L. Marfoe, 1995 [1].

1 W. Adler, 1994, *Kamid el-Loz*, Band 11, *Das "Schatzhaus" im Palastbereich. Die Befunde des Königs*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 47, Bonn; L. Marfoe, 1995, *Kamid el-Loz*, Band 13, *The Prehistoric and Early Historic Context of the Site*, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, Band 41, Bonn.

The excavations in Kamid El-Loz since 1997

In 1997 the work in Kamid el-Loz was resumed by the archaeologists from the Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg under the direction of Prof. Dr. Marlies Heinz. Unlike the early excavators we were interested in the Hellenistic and Roman settlements of Kamid el-Loz as well as in the Bronze Age settlement activities. For the results of our research concerning the Hellenistic and Roman settlements see our home-page (http//www.uni-freiburg.de/aorient/aohome.html).

In 2002 we began research in the temple and palace areas and continued our work on the east-slope of the Tell.

1 Areas If 12-14 are located in the immediate vicinity of the temple buildings, which were uncovered during the excavations of the Universität des Saarlandes (1963-1981, see above). There are several ways to integrate a temple in an ancient Near Eastern settlement: temples can be detached, standing isolated from the settlement either by free space or by their location at topographically exposed sites. Temples can be set apart from their surrounding buildings by walls, or they are integrated with surrounding buildings which border onto each other separated only by streets or alleys, but are designed as integral parts of the whole or have developed in such a way.
In 2002 the new excavation started in the immediate surroundings of the Late and Middle Bronze Age temple (see fig. 9 for the location of the temple and our new squares). The temple was known, but until 2002 we knew next to nothing about its surroundings, about the buildings, the settlement layout and the functions carried out in the temple neighbourhood.
This changed with the results of the 2002 season at Kamid el-Loz.



14 The temple area. On the left hand side the living quarter excavated in 2002.

1 The temple area

In the areas If 12-14 we established a working area by removing the surface rubble. The observation and analysis of the southern section ensured that during the preparation of the area any building structure was not interfered with. The first actual building layer was found approximately 15 cm under the plane surface.



15 Houses in the temple area.

The layout of the second new excavation site in areas III 12-15 was also determined by the results gained by the archaeologists of the Universität des Saarlandes, when they partially uncovered a building with massive stone walls probably rightly termed the 'Palace' of the Late Bronze Age Settlement, lying north of our new trench. Our interests here lay first in acquiring detailed information about the chronology and stratigraphy of the area and second, in getting some insights into the architecture of the palace neighbourhood.

In a trench 28m long (east-west) and 8,50 m wide (north-south) we uncovered 12 rooms and courts and two alleys in very good condition with the walls reaching a height of 1 m. After establishing the nature of the various installations, fireplaces, benches, work surfaces and the inventory of the rooms (pots and tools made of stone) – it soon became clear that the uncovered architecture must be part of a residential area. Through this residential area ran two alleys, one being a cul-de-sac (a typical pattern for ancient Near Eastern residential areas). Among the rubble in the alley a remarkable amount of metal findings surfaced (needles, hooks, and a small 1 cm long golden capsule). According to the pottery this part of the settlement probably dates back to the Late Bronze Age or to the transition period of the Middle Bronze Age to Late Bronze Age (1700/1600 – 1200 BC).

Along the western edge of this excavation area we dug a 3 metre deep trench to a length of 5,50 m north-south and a width of 1. 20 m east-west. Bedrock has not yet been reached. The earliest pottery here can be dated to the Early Bronze Age IV (2500 BC) and provides valuable clues to the history of the settlement.

2 The palace area

In the palace area we also first established a working surface in III a 12-15. The focus of our work lay in collecting stratigraphical and chronological information. Extended excavations were only of secondary importance. In the 4,50 m deep trench (length 25 m east-west, width 2 m north-south) the archaeological findings and the stratigraphical and chronological results provided a valuable basis for further excavations.



16 Preparing the palace area.



17 The walls in the palace trench.



18 Detail of the wall.



19 Stone wall in the palace area.



20 The living area in II e 6.

The trench resulted in the finding of two walls built with massive unhewn stone blocks, situated in the immediate vicinity of the so-called palace, whose walls were built out of comparable stone blocks. The monumentality of the walls showed that we were confronted with part of a building that in its structure was similar to the palace. The immediate vicinity of the massive walls to the palace affirms this assumption and leads to the view that this part functionally



21 Living area, Iron Age.

22 The fortification wall M 44 in area II f 9.

belonged to the palace. The structure was tentatively dated to the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 BC).
The trench also showed for the first time significantly earlier settlement layers of the palace area dating to before the Late Bronze Age. Pottery dates go back into the Early Bronze Age IV (approx. 2500 BC).

The massive walls, however, are not the only evidence that point to further large buildings in the context of the palace. Preparing our working surface we uncovered a curved wall along the eastern section which was of the same type of stone as the palace and the wall mentioned above, and which is also equally massive.

3 The Eastern slope

At the eastern slope four smaller trenches in the areas II e 6, II e 7, II f 9 focused on the pre-Roman settlement. In a trench in 2002 we documented the first evidence of Iron Age layers in this area.

23 Kamid el-Loz 2003. Picture taken by Christian Hübner, Freiburg.



In 2002 we dug several smaller trenches at the eastern slope of the Tell.
In the first layer under the Roman settlement fragments of elaborately painted Iron Age pottery emerged. This, for the first time, pointed to an expansion of the Iron Age settlement well beyond the areas so far known at the hill top.

Two walls, their foundations made of fieldstone and clay brick, as well as several installations, stoves and fireplaces were uncovered. The structures date back to the Iron Age II (app. 10th- 8th century BC) and document the outline of a residential area. In the eastern neighbourhood two further trenches were dug and the settlement layers uncovered. According to the pottery analysis they belong to the transition period between Late Bronze Age and Iron Age.
Whereas the southern cut was too small to show architecture, we were able to outline another living area in the third trench.

At the eastern edge of the slope we came upon a massive stonewall in the fourth trench in area II f 9. This wall, because of its remaining width, is under-

stood to be part of a fortifying wall of the Late Bronze/ Iron Age settlement. It was built of stone and clay bricks, thus conforming in style (though not in its monumentality) to the walls in the area of the residential houses. This wall also dates to the transition period between Late Bronze and Iron Age.

The Season 2002 – First Results

As outlined above, the focus of our work in Kamid el-Loz is to document the settlement's development, that is the development of the settlement's history as well as the development of its layouts, which follow it through its various stages of occupation. Our questions focus also on the functions that Kamid el-Loz had over time (see above our scenario of the Late Bronze Age). We are interested in the 'how' of the development, that is in the process of development as well as in its 'why' – its background and reasons. We try to combine the single results of every year to recreate step-by-step the whole picture. The most important finds of 2002 are valuable mosaic stones.



24 The deep trench in the palace area.

The Kumidi settlement's history starts at the latest in the Early Bronze Age, in the 3rd millennium BC, and ends, not counting today's settlement of Kamid el-Loz, with the end of the Roman settlement around 150 AD and possibly even later.

The earliest as well as the latest data concerning the settlement are only preliminary. We have not reached bedrock in any trench yet, which means the possible existence of earlier settlement layers and an even earlier beginning of settlement activities. Surface findings and the use of the Tell as an Islamic cemetery also point to a settlement activity well beyond the Roman times into the Middle Ages.

New clues to the layout and the function of the settlement could be documented for the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age by the results of 2002.

In the Late Bronze Age a living area with relatively small houses and a network of alleys existed in the immediate vicinity of the temple. According to our current knowledge, domestic work was predominantly done in these houses. Apart from the temple and its neighbouring living area, the Late Bronze Age settlement consisted of the palace and such large buildings in its immediate neighbourhood, whose ground plans and functions have not yet been fully documented but which are known by the massive walls exposed in the trench. Further residential houses in the Late Bronze Age were presumably located at the eastern edge of the settlement, at today's eastern slope, if we indeed can interpret the little evidence we have so far in this way. A fortification of the settlement cannot be ruled out, as has been indicated by the massive wall found during the trench at the eastern edge of the Tell.

The first clues from the 2002 excavations are already expanding our knowledge of how the Late Bronze Age settlement looked and on its functions in the area. We can safely assume that the Late Bronze Age settlement in Kamid el-Loz stretched from the temple and palace area in the West to the residential area in the East. In the West, official buildings were not segregated, but were, at least in the case of the temple, integrated with the residential area. In the North East we only know about certain functions such as 'living' and 'protection' (for-







25 House models from Kamid el-Loz. Photo archives Roger Saidah, courtesy Estelle Saidah.

tification) so far. Well into the Iron Age, the eastern slope was, as far as we can deduce, inhabited (we refer solely to the evidence of the 'old-oriental' epochs, not to the Roman settlement). The findings from the two more eastern trenches termed "living area" as well as the traces of the settlement fortification in the north-east of the Tell date to the period between Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. Together with the Iron Age evidence from the Saarbrücken excavations, we know so far there are residential buildings of the Iron Age settlement, which stretch from the eastern slope to the hilltop and in the West into the neighbouring areas. We also have indications that this settlement (like its Late Bronze Age predecessor) was probably fortified.

This thesis provides a different impression of the Iron Age settlement from that of our colleagues from the Universität des Saarlandes, who interpreted this settlement as unfortified. It is still too early to firmly correct this interpretation, although our thesis points in another direction and postulates the existence of a fortification of the settlement in this epoch.

To reconstruct the process of a village-to-city development is one of our aims which we are trying to achieve with the excavations at Kamid el-Loz. After working one season in the temple and palace area it is surely too early to attempt a detailed reconstruction of this process. However, it was the findings of the Late Bronze Age settlement in Kamid el-Loz and our knowledge about the functions of this settlement, that pointed out the potential of the Tell in answering our questions.

Ancient Near Eastern urban settlements usually contain, as mentioned above, buildings with 'official' functions, temples and palaces, as well as residential areas and often, fortifications.

The Late Bronze Age Kamid el-Loz shows all of these urban architectural categories, the temple, the palace, probably further monumental buildings in the immediate neighbourhood of the palace and as the results of the 2002 season indicate, the residential area in the temple district and also very likely, the fortification.

At the same time, our trenches provide enough material to support the assumption of earlier (village?) developments in Kamid el-Loz, beginning at least in the Early Bronze Age.

The potential of reconstructing the stages of development from village to urban settlement in Kamid el-Loz is there, as well as the possibility of finding in Kamid el-Loz a settlement, which had been planned and directly founded as an urban centre.

From village to town and back to village, Kamid el-Loz seems to be the place for following up the whole process.

Conclusion

The research of the ancient Near Eastern cultures of today's Lebanon through excavations in Kamid el-Loz opens up so far a widely unknown area of Near Eastern archaeology. Because of the civil war situation of Lebanon, this region of the Levant, unlike the neighbouring northern, southern and eastern regions, has been an empty page archaeologically speaking. With the excavations in Kamid el-Loz this can be changed. At least 3000 years of settlement history are waiting to be discovered!

(translated by Kerstin Fest, Freiburg).